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Larry R. Hook
Superintendent
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Kim Tinsley
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January 19, 2023

Dear Forest Hills Staff, Families and Community Members,

Last night the Forest Hills Board of Education unanimously approved placing a 6.9 mill combination levy on the May 2, 2023 ballot. The ballot issue includes a 5.4 mill operating levy, which will fund daily operations such as staffing, supplies and materials, with a 1.5 mill permanent improvement levy, which will cover some of the district's building, maintenance and equipment costs. This proposal would cost \$20.13 per month for a home valued at \$100,000 and about \$60 for a home valued at \$300,000.

Since becoming the Superintendent at Forest Hills this August, I can confidently say that we are doing all we can to support the long-term health of our district. As you know, we have turned over every rock to see if there are other avenues to fund the quality of education our community expects without returning to the ballot. None of those options were determined to be viable.

Simply put, this is the way schools are funded in Ohio. According to the state's current funding formula, our community has a higher-than-average ability to fund its own schools. Therefore, we receive less-than-average support from the state. Our remaining option to maintain operations, as is the case with most Ohio districts, is to return to our taxpayers to fund the quality education the community expects at regular intervals. The district's most recent operating levy was approved by voters in 2019 and was able to stretch a year longer due to COVID emergency relief funds.

Forest Hills is and should be proud that we have been able to offer such a remarkable experience in our schools while maintaining a highly competitive residential tax rate. The school tax rate for FHSD is below the Hamilton County average and the district has a lower cost per pupil than other districts in the state and county.

We are simultaneously committed to tightening our belts and living within our means. If the levy passes, FHSD will be able to continue providing a high quality educational experience that is in line with the district's commitment to excellence and to its students. It would not increase staff or programs. The permanent improvement portion of the combined issue would provide additional funds to address issues to maintain the structure and usefulness of our facilities.

We will continue to do our best to keep you informed. Our next steps as a district and Board of Education are to make clear plans for what will happen if the issue does not pass. The district is currently operating in deficit spending and will experience a negative cash balance by 2026 if nothing changes. Without additional revenue, the district will be required by law to make significant cuts to operate within the funds available. It is important that our district be prepared for both outcomes and we will share that information with you as we continue to work through our financial plans.

There are many more details about this ballot issue on our [website](#). I will also be sharing more information in my regular communications. I encourage you if you have questions to reach out to me or Alanna Cropper, our treasurer and chief financial officer.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Larry Hook".

Larry R. Hook
Superintendent